



**American Lung Association
of the Northeast**

March 20, 2013

**LungNE.org
1-800-LUNG USA**

Public Health Committee
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**Testimony of the American Lung Association in Connecticut in Support of
Raised Senate Bill 1068 An Act Concerning Care Coordination for Chronic
Disease**

Senator Gerratana, Representative Johnson and Members of the Public Health
Committee:

My name is Michelle Marichal and I serve as the Acting Director of Health Education and Public Policy at the American Lung Association (ALA) in Connecticut. The American Lung Association is a not-for-profit public health organization dedicated to fighting lung disease through research, education and public policy.

The American Lung Association supports Senate Bill 1068 because it will essentially create a plan to reduce the incidence of chronic disease, improve care coordination and bring to light the existing programs in the state addressing chronic disease. The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) has created plans to address several chronic diseases and this bill would address chronic disease as a whole and how to move forward with the limited available resources in the state. We recognize the budget and funding restrictions at the DPH and have many health professional volunteers that would be willing to lend their expertise in the process of developing chronic disease care coordination plans in various capacities.

One disease that is underrepresented in Connecticut is, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). COPD refers to both chronic bronchitis and emphysema; both are characterized by obstruction of airflow that interferes with normal breathing. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COPD is the third leading cause of death in the United States. In 2011, there were 166,000 adults in Connecticut living with COPD according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). There are likely many more in the state that have not been diagnosed as COPD is largely underdiagnosed.

Asthma is a chronic lung disease that makes it harder to move air in and out of your lungs. In 2010, according to the BRFSS, there were approximately 246,000 adults with asthma in Connecticut and another 89,000 children with asthma. The 2012 Burden of Asthma in Connecticut report showed that public insurance was the payment source for approximately 74% of asthma hospitalizations in 2009.

Lung cancer is the leading cancer killer in both men and women in the United States. Approximately 375,000 Americans are living with lung cancer today and an estimated 160,000 will die from the disease this year. According to the National Cancer Institute, in 2009 there were approximately 2,600 individuals in Connecticut with lung cancer.

According to the CDC approximately 25% of individuals with chronic disease have one or more daily activity limitations and chronic disease accounts for 70% of all deaths in the United States. It is essential for Connecticut to create a plan to address chronic disease. There are far too many individuals in Connecticut with lung disease and other chronic disease and the state should have a grasp on the burden of these diseases on Connecticut, what the available programs are, and what level of coordination is happening in Connecticut in regards to the available programs. Once this information is obtained, the state should be able to develop a plan to address the chronic diseases in order for the residents of Connecticut to live healthier lives and reduce the economic burden on the individuals with the disease and also Connecticut.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 1068. We urge your favorable vote on this bill.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michelle Marichal". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Michelle Marichal
Acting Director, Health Education and Public Policy
American Lung Association in Connecticut